

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 OES-07 DLOS-09 /128 W

-----030978 231909Z /50

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5066

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 07090

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, SS, MO, AG, SP

SUBJECT: SUAREZ TRIP TO MOROCCO

REF: RABAT 3741 (NOTAL)

1. THE SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTRY CONFIRMED PUBLICLY JUNE 23 THAT PRIME MINISTER ADOLFO SUAREZ WILL MAKE A 24-HOUR VISIT TO MOROCCO JUNE 26-27. (HE MUST RETURN TO MADRID TO RECEIVE VISITING FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING, WHO ARRIVES JUNE 28.) WHILE THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WENT INTO NO DETAILS, MADRID NEWSPAPERS QUOTED OFFICIAL MOROCCAN SOURCES (REPORTED FROM RABAT BY THE SPANISH NEWS AGENCY EFE) AS DECLARING THE VISIT WOULD BE "A VERY IMPORTANT EVENT" IN MOROCCAN-SPANISH RELATIONS, AND IDENTIFIED THE OAU/CANARIES ISSUE, THE SAHARA, AND FISHING PROBLEMS AS THE TOPICS TO BE TREATED. SOME PAPERS ASSERTED THAT OFFICIAL SPANISH

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CONFIRMATION OF THE TRIP WAS DELAYED PENDING THE POSSIBLE FIRMING UP OF A SUAREZ MEETING WITH ALGERIAN PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE, IN LINE WITH THE GOS FORMAL POLICY OF SEEKING TO PRESERVE SOME SEMBLANCE OF BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE TWO NORTH AFRICAN NEIGHBORS.

2. THE MFA'S ACTING CHIEF FOR AFRICA AND CONTINENTAL

ASIA (URIARTE) CONFIRMED TO US THAT SUAREZ WAS TRAVELLING TO RABAT WITH A BROAD AGENDA. BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE IN GOOD SHAPE, URIARTE NOTED, AND THE RANGE OF TOPICS CONSIDERABLE. HE SHIED FROM CITING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE TRIP, HOWEVER, EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER PRESS SPECULATION THAT SUAREZ MIGHT BE HATCHING SOME SORT OF DIPLOMATIC SPECTACULAR. AS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUAREZ-BOUMEDIENE MEETING, URIARTE SAID ONE WAS PROJECTED, BUT NO DATE HAD YET BEEN SET.

3. COMMENT: ONE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTY WITH SETTING A DATE IS OF COURSE THE PROXIMITY OF THE OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM AND ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE CANARIES ISSUE. WHETHER SUCH A MEETING WERE BETTER HELD BEFORE OR AFTER KHARTOUM WOULD LARGEMLY DEPEND ON WHETHER ALGERIA WAS PREPARED TO EASE OFF ITS SUPPORT OF THE CANARIES INDEPENDENCE GROUP MPAIAC, A QUESTION REGARDING WHICH GOS OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO EXPRESS RESIGNATION WITHOUT ENTIRELY GIVING UP HOPE.

4. IN THE MEANTIME, SUAREZ WILL CERTAINLY HAVE ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT IN RABAT, WITH THE MOST URGENT TOPIC BEING THE CANARIES ISSUE. ACCORDING TO SPANISH PRESS REPORTS, THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE MEETING IN DAR ES SALAAM HAS JUST REAFFIRMED ITS POSITION THAT THE CANARIES ARE AFRICAN AND SHOULD BE DECOLONIZED. WHILE

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THE ACTION CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO SPANISH OFFICIALS, IT CAN ONLY REINFORCE THEIR DETERMINATION TO LEAVE NO DIPLOMATIC STONE UNTURNED AS THEY LOOK TOWARD KHARTOUM. WITH THE GOS STILL WORRIED THAT SUPPORT FOR CANARIES INDEPENDENCE WILL SOMEHOW SLIDE THROUGH DESPITE WIDE-SPREAD AFRICAN INDIFFERENCE TO THE ISSUE, SUAREZ WILL BE LOOKING FOR GOM REASSURANCES THAT IT WILL WORK ACTIVELY IN KHARTOUM TO BLOCK OR SIDETRACK CONSIDERATION OF THE CANARIES QUESTION.

5. THE SAHARA SHOULD TAKE UP LESS OF THE BRIEF VISIT'S TIME, SINCE MOROCCAN-SPANISH DIFFERENCES IN THIS REGARD APPEAR NEITHER TO REQUIRE TREATMENT NOR TO BE SUSCEPTIBLE OF EARLY RESOLUTION. WHILE THE GOM MAY SEEK TO

STRENGTHEN ITS CLAIM OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER ITS PORTION OF THE TERRITORY, SPAIN IS MOST UNLIKELY TO CEDE ITS POSITION ON THE POINT (THAT IT TRANSFERRED ADMINISTERING RESPONSIBILITY, NO SOVEREIGNTY). AS FOR THE ONGOING SPANISH EMBARGO ON NEW COMMITMENTS FOR ARMS SHIPMENTS TO COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT, ONE SPANISH OFFICIAL NOTED TO US RECENTLY THAT IT WAS "PEANUTS,"

HAVING NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON MOROCCAN MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

6. THE PRESS MENTION OF FISHING DIFFICULTIES REFERS TO

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SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 OES-07 DLOS-09 /128 W

-----031002 231909Z /50

P 231725Z JUN 78

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C O N N I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MADRID 07090

THE PROBLEMS SPANISH FISHING VESSELS HAVE CONTINUED TO ENCOUNTER IN THE SAHARA AREA. THE CREW OF ONE SHIP, SEIZED BY THE POLISARIO LAST APRIL, REMAINS IN THE INSURGENTS' HANDS, AND MORE RECENTLY A SPANISH FISHING BOAT WAS SITED ON FROM A RUBBER BOAT IN WATERS NEAR THE SAHARA. IT ESCAPED WITHOUT INJURY, BUT THE NEWS OF THE INCIDENT STIRRED FURTHER UNEASE IN SPANISH FISHING SECTORS.

7. THE BIG QUESTION MARK HANGS OVER THE CEUTA AND MELILLA ISSUE, REGARDING WHICH THE OFFICIAL SPANISH POSITION OF THE ENCLAVES, UNDENIABLE AND UNTOUCHABLE SPANISHNESS IS OCCASIONALLY UNDERCUT BY FRANK RECOGNITION, GUARDED AND PRIVATE, OF THEIR RELATION TO THE GIBRALTAR PROBLEM. WITH SOLUTION OF THAT TROBLEM OBVIOUSLY A LONG WAY OFF AT BEST, THE GOS HAS PREFERRED TO GO ALONG WITH THE APPARENT MOROCCAN DISSOSITION TO LET THE MATTER LIE DORMANT (REFTEL). THERE ARE RECURRING SPANISH

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EXPRESSIONS OF RESENTMENT, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE EASY DIP-
LOMATIC PRESSURE POINT WHICH THE EXISTENCE OF THE
ENCLAVES GIVES TO MOROCCO, AND SPAIN WOULD CERTAINLY
WELCOME A WAY OUT OF THE FIX IF ONE COULD BE DEVISED.

8. IN SUM, IT IS A FULL PLATE FOR A SHORT VISIT, AND
IT IS ALSO COMPLICATED: SUAREZ MAY WELL FEEL CAUGHT
BETWEEN THE DESIRE FOR AN APPARENT DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH
ON THE ONE HAND, AND ON THE OTHER A FELT NEED TO KEEP
THE LINES OPEN TO ALGERIA. EATON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID07090
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780262-0947
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780626/aaaaawiz.tel
Line Count: 185
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7781a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 RABAT 3741
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2228781
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUAREZ TRIP TO MOROCCO
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, OVIP, MO, AG, SP, (SUAREZ, ADOLFO), (GISCARD, D'ESTAING)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7781a182-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014